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SUBJECT: OUSTED EASTERN CAPE MAYOR DISCUSSES POLITICS

¶1. (SBU) Summary. On December 23, Cape Town CG, Poloff, Econoff, PAO, and FCS met with Ntombentle Cordelia Peter, the former Mayor of Buffalo City (East London) in the Eastern Cape when she came to the Consulate to pick her visa for her forthcoming IV program. Peter discussed a range of issues, including service delivery in the townships, reducing HIV/AIDS rates, and improving education.

(Note: Buffalo City is one of the biggest non-metropolitan municipalities in the country, in the heart of the ANC's traditional base of support in the Eastern Cape. In recent weeks this municipality has been rocked by defections from the ANC to COPE.

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End Note.) Peter also discussed her problems with the ANC and the possibility of joining the newest political party in South Africa, COPE. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Peter told Consulate officers she wants to mobilize development in the Eastern Cape and identify areas that need development assistance. She recently finished her master's degree, which focused on Mdantsane, the second biggest township in South Africa, located in Buffalo City. She studied ways of improving the township by bringing in business, revamping services, reducing HIV/AIDS, and improving education. Peter also discussed her ousting by the ANC and said, ?it is very sad to see what is happening to the party.? She can not understand why the head of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL), Julius Malema, ?is behaving the way he is by inciting violence? and she can not align herself with a President who believes ?he can take a shower after sleeping with someone to prevent HIV/AIDS.?

¶3. (SBU) A lifelong member of the ANC, Peter worked her way up the ranks of the political party beginning in the ANCYL and becoming Mayor of Buffalo City in 2006. Although Peter is a strong believer in the traditional values of the ANC, she believes the current ANC leadership is ?disregarding the Constitution.? Peter explained that she had no aspirations to be mayor, but the ANC ?forced? her to accept the job. Her problems with the ANC started in the beginning of 2008 after the ANC Convention in Polokwane when ANC members started to question Mbeki?s ?devotion and assistance? to her. Peter told Consulate officers she is close to Mbeki and said, ?Mbeki has a soft spot for me.? When asked if Mbeki would join COPE, Peter said she did not think he would leave the ANC.

¶4. (SBU) After Polokwane her problems continued with the ANC. In 2008, the Buffalo City manager (an ANC stalwart) was under investigation and awaiting trial. The night before the trial, members of the ANCYL came to Peter?s house at 10 PM and told Peter ?to stop the court case against the city manager or else she had no place in the ANC.? After Peter failed to intervene in the court case, the ANC accused her of working with COPE and of using municipal resources to help fund COPE. Additionally, Peter alleged the ANC tapped her phone to see if she was working with COPE, but did not indicate to Consulate officers whether she had any evidence of this.

¶5. (SBU) In response to Poloff?s question regarding her membership in the ANC, Peter said she is still a member of the ANC since she has such a long history with the party, although she is becoming quickly disillusioned and will resign soon. She is not sure if she

will join COPE, but COPE organizers recently called her to ask why she did not attend the December 16 recent meeting.

¶6. (SBU) Note. Peter will travel to the U.S. in January as part of the IV program. Because Peter came to the Consulate to collect her Qthe IV program. Because Peter came to the Consulate to collect her visa, CG and Poloff took the opportunity to question Peter about her recent ousting from her position as Buffalo City Mayor. She began her conversation with Consulate officers by saying it was okay that she was fired by the ANC as the Mayor of Buffalo City because she was ousted for standing firm to her principles. Although Peter was happy to discuss the events which led to her dismissal, she did so only in direct response to Poloff?s questions. End note.